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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004179

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, OCCUPIED  
TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

NEWS REPORTS IN JORDAN'S DAILIES ON JULY 29 HIGHLIGHTED KING ABDULLAH'S CNN INTERVIEW, IN WHICH HE REAFFIRMED JORDAN'S REJECTION OF MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ. THEY ALSO REPORTED THE ISRAELI RAID ON HEBRON BY ARMY UNITS AND SETTLERS, UNDER THE HEADLINE: "ISRAELI TERRORISM SACKS HEBRON."

A NUMBER OF DAILY EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES DID NOT APPEAR IN THEIR USUAL SPOT ON JULY 29. OF THOSE THAT DID, COMMENTATORS CRITICIZED REPORTS THAT THE U.S. WOULD RESUME THE INTERCEPTION OF SHIPS IN AND OUT OF AQABA, AND THE U.S. DOMINATION OF THE UN. ONE EDITORIALIST ADVISED PALESTINIANS NOT TO RETALIATE AGAINST THE ISRAELI RAID ON GAZA BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE SWALLOWING SHARON'S BAIT.

NEWS REPORTS

THE LEAD STORY IN ALL JORDANIAN DAILIES ON JULY 29 WAS KING ABDULLAH'S INTERVIEW WITH CNN AFTER HIS MEETING WITH THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER AND BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH. THE NEWSPAPERS HIGHLIGHTED THE FOLLOWING QUOTES:

- DIALOGUE IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE WAY TO DEAL WITH THE IRAQI SITUATION
- WE HAVE NOT AND WILL NOT DISCUSS WITH THE U.S. THE USE OF JORDANIAN TERRITORY FOR A STRIKE AGAINST IRAQ
- WE HAVE RECEIVED AN APOLOGY FROM U.S. OFFICIALS FOR CIRCULATING RUMORS ABOUT THE USE OF JORDANIAN TERRITORY FOR MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ
- WE ARE VERY CAUTIOUS ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN THE WEST BANK BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO SEND THE WRONG MESSAGE
- PALESTINIANS ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE CONCERNED WITH THEIR POLITICAL OPTIONS AND THEY SHOULD DECIDE THEIR FUTURE.

ALL DAILIES CARRIED ON THEIR FRONT PAGES AGENCY REPORTS THAT IRAQ HAS MADE PREPARATIONS TO CONFRONT THE "AMERICAN AGGRESSION."

SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI PLAYED DOWN, WHILE OTHER DAILIES REPORTED ON THE FRONT PAGES REPORTS ABOUT THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON HEBRON, UNDER HEADLINES SUCH AS: "ISRAEL TERRORISM SACKS HEBRON."

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- THE SIEGE OF AQABA AGAIN  
LEADING JORDANIAN DAILY COLUMNIST FAHED AL-FANEK WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON JULY 29: "THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THE U.S. RED SEA FLEET PLANS TO REINSTATE THE SIEGE ON AQABA, GIVING ITSELF THE RIGHT TO INTERCEPT AND SEARCH SHIPS ENTERING OR LEAVING THE PORT TO ASSURE THAT THE RULES OF THE SIEGE ON IRAQ ARE RESPECTED. IF TRUE, THIS STUPID AMERICAN DECISION DESERVES THE STRONGEST CONDEMNATION BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT THE U.S., DOES NOT TRUST JORDAN DESPITE THE LATTER'S RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTIONS, UNJUST THOUGH THEY ARE. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, WE DO NOT SEE THE U.S. IMPOSE A SIMILAR SIEGE ON THE PORTS OF SYRIA, TURKEY, IRAN, OR THE EMIRATES. IT SINGLES OUT JORDAN, WHICH SHOWS DISRESPECT FOR THIS COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGNTY."

-- SHARON BOMBED A READY PALESTINIAN SECURITY PLAN  
DAILY COLUMNIST SULTAN HATTAB WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON JULY 29: "WHEN EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN ISRAEL LEARNED THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF THE SUCCESS OF THE PALESTINIAN PLAN THAT WAS WORKED OUT UNDER ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE, AND WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

AGENCIES, THESE ISRAELI AGENCIES, WITH THE COLLUSION OF SHARON, WORKED TO ABORT THE PLAN BY CONDUCTING THE RAID ON GAZA. SHARON NOW WANTS MORE ISRAELIS TO BE KILLED, AND HE WANTS PALESTINIAN RETALIATIONS, THE SEEDS OF WHICH HE SOWS BY HIS AGGRESSION, BECAUSE THIS PROLONGS HIS GOVERNMENT'S LEASE OF LIFE AND THE CONTINUATION OF HIS PLANS OF USURPING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND PREVENTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE."

-- THE UN, OWNED BY THE U.S.  
DAILY COLUMNIST MAZEN AL-SAKET WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 29: "WHEN COUNTRIES DECLARE THEMSELVES OPPOSED TO MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ, AND OUT OF FEAR OF THEIR AMERICAN MASTERS THEY SHYLY HIDE BEHIND THE LACK OF A UN RESOLUTION, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THIS ORGANIZATION HASTENS TO

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SUSPEND TALKS WITH IRAQ. AFTER THE ISRAELI MASSACRE IN GAZA, THE U.S. LAID A CONDITION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL THAT ANY RESOLUTION ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE SHOULD CONDEMN PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND DESCRIBE IT AS TERRORISM. THE UN HAS BECOME A TOOL OF ITS OWNER, THE U.S., SIMILAR TO THE ARAB POLITICAL JOKE ABOUT POLITICAL PLURALISM." GNEHM